

**Draft  
Environmental Impact Report/  
Environmental Assessment**

**State Route 138 Widening Project  
From Avenue T to State Route 18  
Junction Through  
the Communities of Littlerock,  
Pearblossom, Llano and the City of  
Palmdale**

**SCH Number: 1998091007**



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## 2.0 Alternatives including the Proposed Project

This section describes the alternative analysis by which the Preferred Alternative was identified. Also it describes how this process complies with the applicable requirements of the Intermodal Surface Transportation Efficiency Act (ISTEA) of 1991. Alternatives that were considered at various times are also described, along with the reasons why they were rejected. Related Transportation improvements, project phasing, and funding issues are also discussed.

The formulation of alternatives for analysis in this Environmental Impact Report/Environmental Assessment (EIR/EA) involved the review of prior studies and additional analysis. This analysis identified transportation system deficiencies, developed and screened a broad range of alternatives, and performed a detailed evaluation of those alternatives deemed most responsive to safety, travel and community concerns and demands. Alternatives were evaluated for their ability to attain project goals and objectives and as the alternative analysis process merged with the environmental process, the safety and transportation needs for the State Route 138 corridor were evaluated with consideration of environmental needs.

### 2.1 Alternative 1: Widening along existing facility

This alternative involves highway widening on State Route 138 between Avenue T to the west and the Los Angeles/San Bernardino County Line to the east. This alternative involves the addition of one lane in each direction, upgrading the existing facility to a standard 4 lane conventional highway with a 16 ft (4.8 m) median for turns. The existing alignment and profile would be maintained except in the community of Pearblossom where the alignment would shift to the north by approximately 12 ft (3.66 m) from 121<sup>st</sup> St. East to Longview Road and then return to the existing roadway. The vertical profile would change from the Pearblossom to the junction with State Route 18 to improve stopping sight distance and accommodate drainage culverts. This alternative would include two 12 ft (3.6 m) lanes, one in each direction, standard 8 ft (2.4 m) shoulders and a 16 ft (4.8 m) median for turns. Right-of-way width of 200 ft (60 m) would accommodate drainage culverts in undeveloped areas and curbs and gutters in developed areas. Present right-of-way varies from a minimum of 50 ft (15.24 m) to a maximum of 100 ft (30.48 m). See Figures 4 and 5.

Other proposed features for the highway widening are described below.

Curve Corrections - The widening will include curve corrections in the immediate vicinity of the following locations:

- 72<sup>nd</sup> Street East
- 116<sup>th</sup> Street
- 175<sup>th</sup> Street East
- Avenue W
- State Route 18 Junction.

Junction Modification – The project would modify the State Route 138/State Route 18 Junction by providing a direct connector from the eastbound 138 to the eastbound 18.

Bridge Widening – Two bridges, California Aqueduct (BR 53-2098), and Big Rock Wash (BR 53-313 and BR 53-314), will be widened. The widening of these bridges will accommodate drainage

culverts and facilitate functional wildlife corridors. Little Rock Creek Bridge will have the existing median closed.

Elevation of Profile- the widening of the State Route 138 would include raised profiles along the highway to accommodate drainage requirements and eliminate the rolling profile from Pearblossom to State Route 18 thereby improving the stopping sight distance and reducing the number of fatal cross-median accidents.

It is Caltrans Policy to upgrade highways to the current highway standards in order to improve safety and efficiency in transportation. Consideration during the design process was given to the occurrences of flash floods between Big Rock Wash and Junction State Route 138/State Route 18. The highway along this area is subjected to flood waters washing over the highway. To meet the drainage requirements for this area a design was developed that would raise the profile of the existing highway. Caltrans policy states that the design of highway drainage structures and other features must consider the probability of flooding and provide protection which is commensurate with the importance of the highway, the potential for property damage and traffic safety. Drainage design seeks to prevent the retention of water on the highway and provide for removal of water from the roadway.

Standard highway dimensions for the State Route 138 widening project can be classified into the following categories:

Developed Areas: The existing width of both east and westbound lanes within urbanized areas is approximately 30 ft (9.14 m) from the highway centerline. Both directions of the highway, within the limits of the proposed project, will be widened to include an additional 20 ft (6.10 m). After project construction, each direction of State Route 138 will have a total width of 52 ft (15.85 m) from the highway centerline. These dimensions are illustrated by Figure 4, Typical Cross Section for Developed Areas.

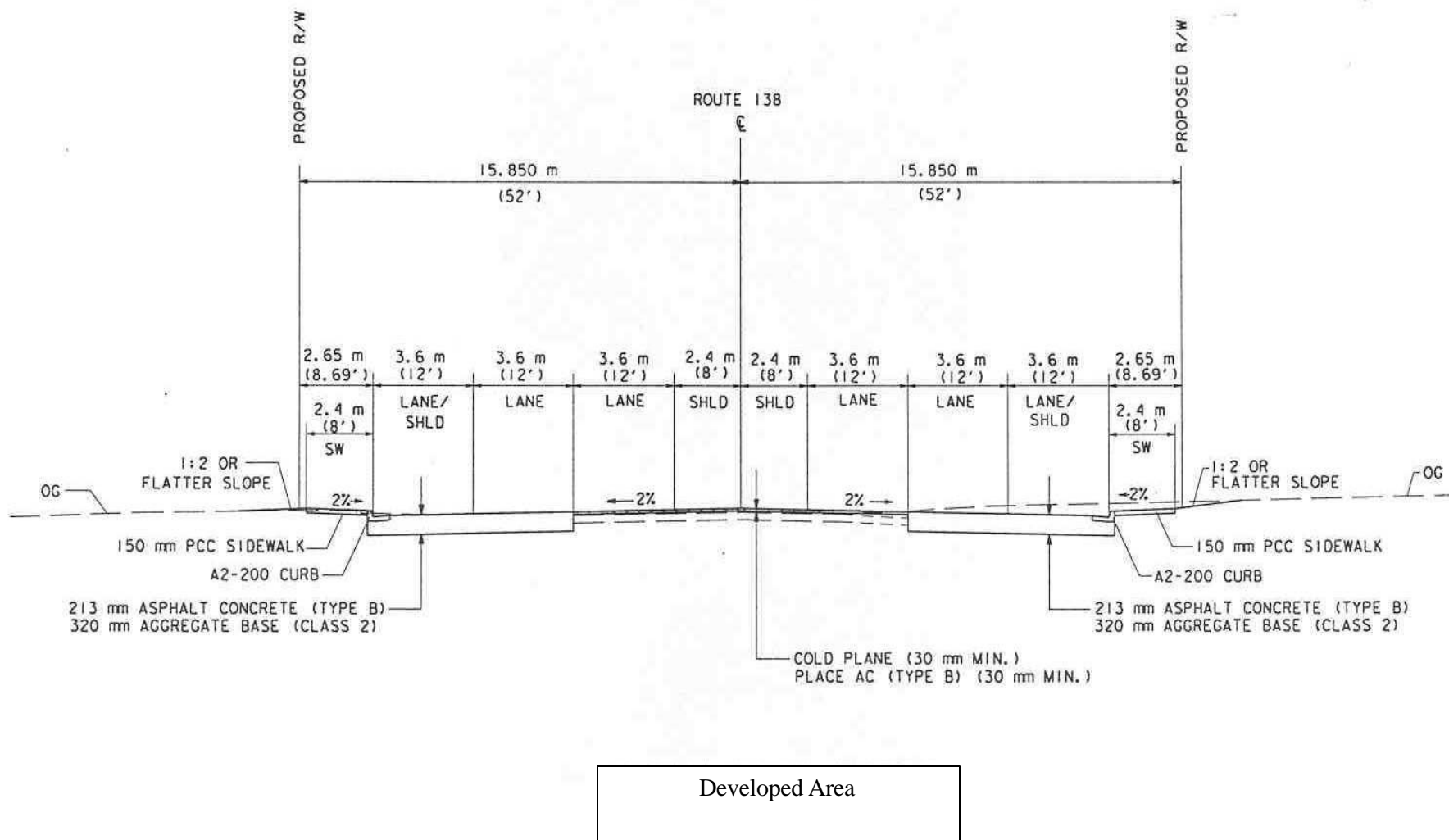
Undeveloped Areas: The existing width of both east and westbound lanes within undeveloped areas is approximately 30 ft (9.14 m) from the highway centerline. Both directions of the highway, within the limits of the proposed project, will be widened to include an additional 50 ft (15.24 m). After project construction the width of the highway will have a total width of 80 ft (24.38 m) from the highway centerline in order to accommodate drainage easements along the highway. However, it should be noted that the 52 ft (15.85 m) will apply only to areas of the roadway which require additional fill (imported and local borrow) during project construction. These dimensions are illustrated by Figure 5, Typical Cross Section Undeveloped Areas.

These measurements are the standard dimensions anticipated for the State Route 138 widening project; however, slight variations to this standard may occur. It should also be noted that these dimensions include both paved areas resulting from project implementation along with any additional right-of-way which may extend beyond paved areas after project implementation.

The following alternatives are based on the existing highway structure and proposed changes in alternative 1, but with specific design variations along certain portions of the State Route 138. See Figure 6 Design Alternatives State Route 138.

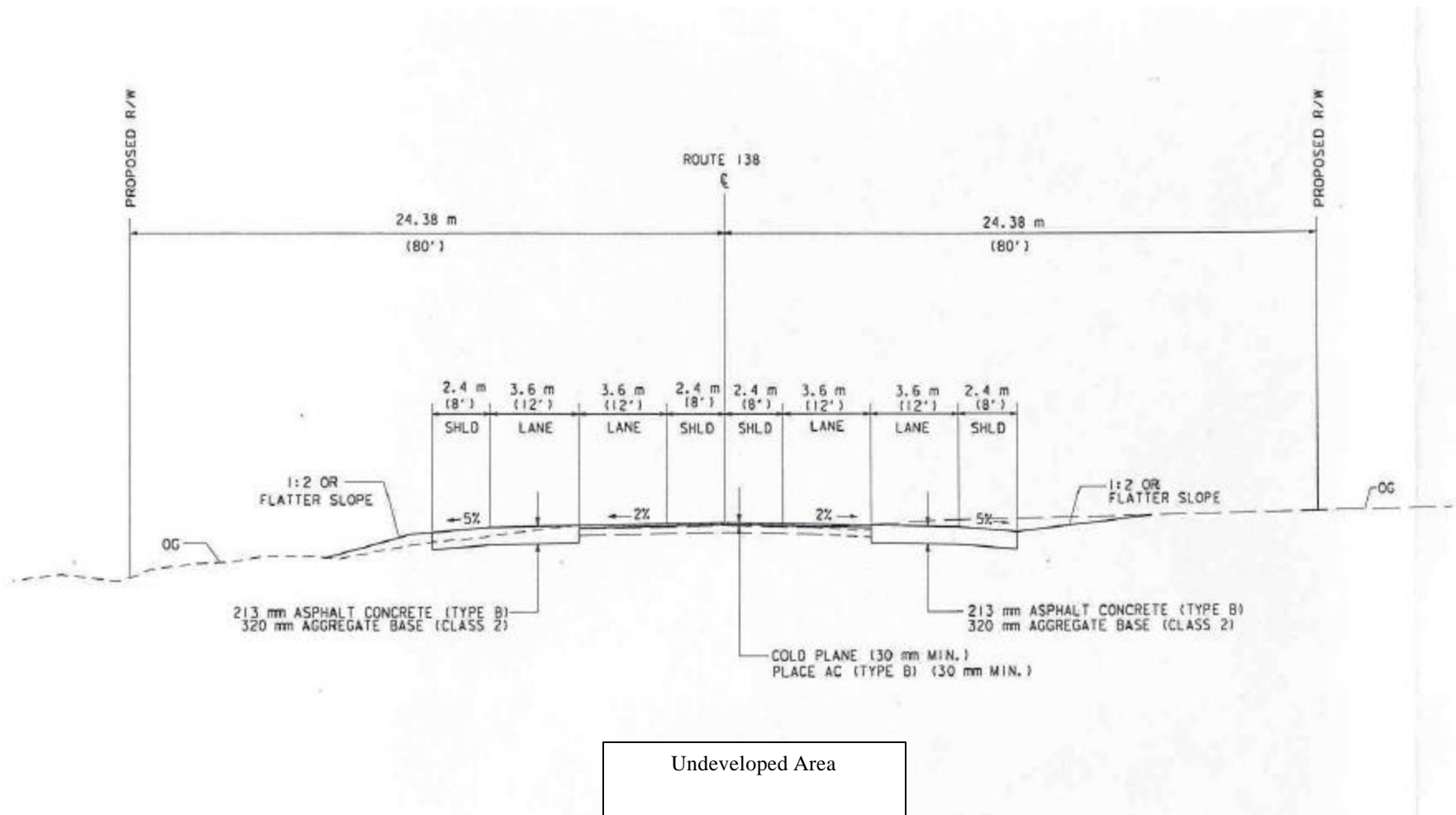
The implementation of this design variation would:

- Have a direct impact on the Llano del Rio Hotel Site

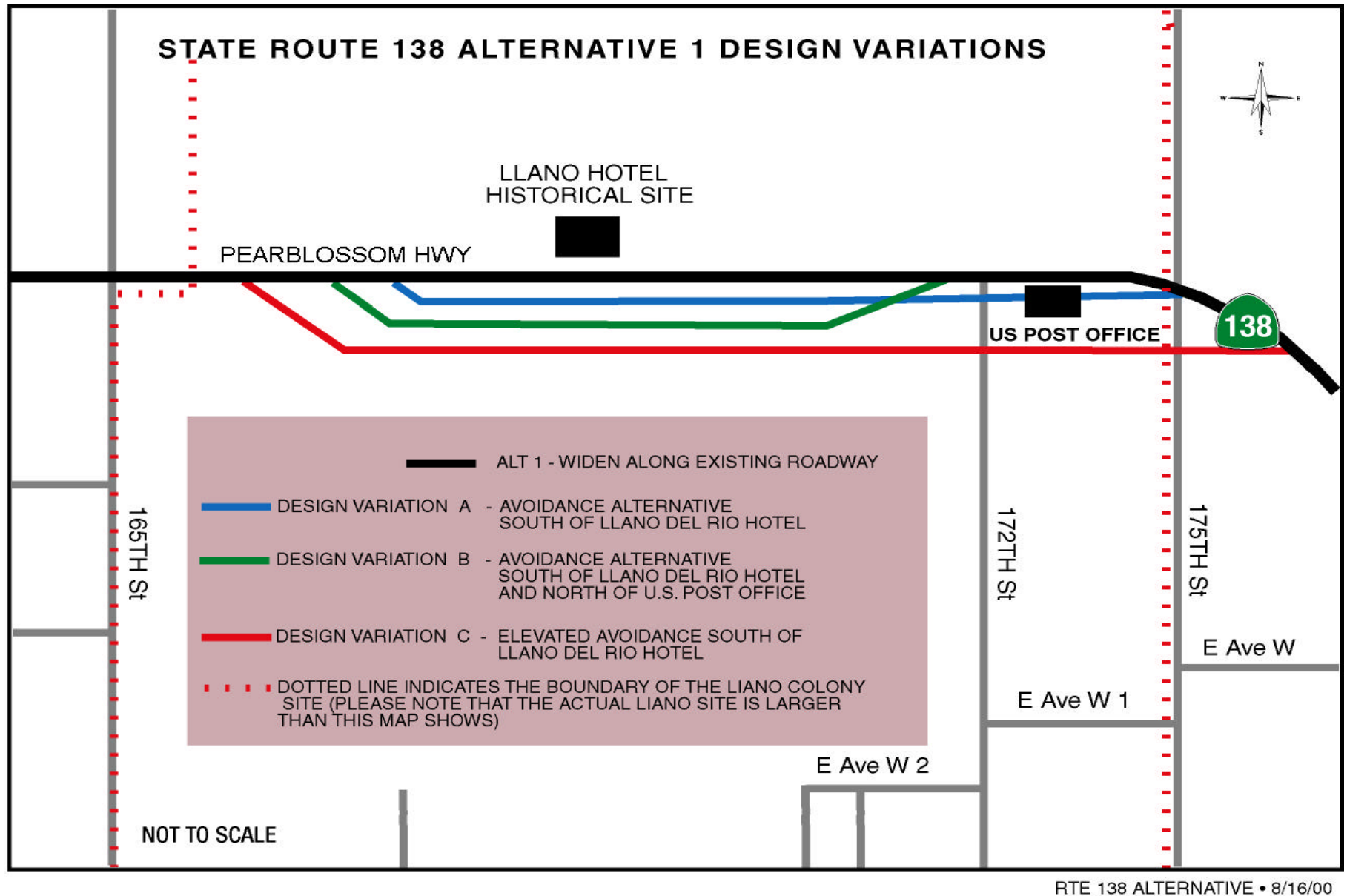


**FIGURE 4** TYPICAL CROSS-SECTION FOR DEVELOPED AREA





**FIGURE 5** TYPICAL CROSS SECTION FOR UNDEVELOPED AREA



**FIGURE 6 DESIGN VARIATIONS A, B, AND C**

### 2.1.2 Design Variation A: South of Llano del Rio hotel

This design variation involves all of the features of Alternative 1; however, near the community of Llano a new alignment would be constructed to the south to avoid impacts to the Llano del Rio site. The new alignment will shift to the south by approximately 20 ft (6 m) just east of 165<sup>th</sup> Street East and will continue east until it rejoins the existing highway west of 175<sup>th</sup> Street.

The implementation of this design variation would:

- Create a barrier for the animals that migrate across the highway
- Relocate State Route 138 from its historic setting within the Llano del Rio Cooperative Colony Site
- Keep the existing rolling profile that limits sight distance
- Allow floodwaters to cross over the highway between Big Rock Wash and Junction State Route 138/State Route 18 causing unsafe conditions for motorists

### 2.1.3 Design Variation B (Preferred Alternative): South of Llano del Rio Hotel and North of U.S. Post Office

This design variation involves all the features of Alternative 1; however near the Llano del Rio hotel widening of the existing roadway will occur 82 ft (25 m) to the south and as the route approaches the U.S. Post office located in Llano it will shift north to the existing roadway to avoid it and the profile will be raised approximately 5 ft (1.52m) to accommodate the arch type pipe drainage culverts for this variation before and after the Llano hotel site.

The implementation of this design variation would:

- Create a barrier for the animals that migrate across the highway
- Relocate State Route 138 from its historic setting within the Llano del Rio Cooperative Colony Site

### 2.1.4 Design Variation C: South of Llano del Rio Hotel

This design variation involves all the features of Alternative 1; however this variation proposes to realign the highway approximately 394 ft (120 meters) to the south in order to raise the roadway profile approximately 15 ft (4.6 meters) to accommodate 8 foot (2.4 m) x 8 foot (2.4 m) drainage culverts for this variation and avoid the hotel.

The implementation of this design variation would:

- Adversely affect the existing flora and fauna by creating a new alignment.
- Create a barrier for the animals that migrate across the highway.
- Visually impair the view of the Llano site
- Relocate State Route 138 from its historic setting within the Llano del Rio Cooperative Colony Site

### 2.1.5 Design Variation D: Avenue V, Fort Tejon and Avenue V-8

This variation involves all of the features of Alternative 1; however, near the community of Littlerock a new alignment will be constructed to the south of the existing alignment. At 70<sup>th</sup> Street East, this

alignment will veer south towards Avenue V and then continue along Avenue V to 82<sup>nd</sup> Street. At 82<sup>nd</sup> Street, the alignment will veer further to the south to continue along Fort Tejon Road and will then traverse further east along Avenue V-8 until it rejoins the existing highway at the intersection of 116<sup>th</sup> Street East and State Route 138 (PM 58.67, KP 94.52).

The implementation of this design variation would:

- Adversely impact relatively undisturbed native vegetation.
- Reduce and fragment habitat.
- Create barriers to wildlife movement throughout the area impacted.
- Disrupt the economic life of the three rural communities (Littlerock, Pearblossom, and Llano) by diverting traffic from the businesses along the existing highway.
- Require substantial new right-of-way
- Substantial number of displacements

#### 2.1.6 Design Variation E: Avenue V

This alternative involves all of the features of Alternative 1; however, near the community of Littlerock a new alignment will be constructed to the south of the existing alignment. At 70<sup>th</sup> Street East, this alignment will veer south towards Avenue V and then continue along Avenue V until it rejoins the existing highway at the intersection of Avenue V and State Route 138 (PM 57.94, KP 93.34).

This alternative is similar to Littlerock Avoidance Alternative D mentioned above and will have the same impacts to relatively undisturbed native vegetation due to constructing a new facility away from the existing roadway.

#### 2.1.7 Attainment of Project Goals

Alternative 1 design variation B attains the project goals and objectives as described below.

**Goal:** *Improve safety*

This alternative would meet the project goal for improving safety. The addition of another lane in each direction of traffic flow would improve the level of service for the highway by decreasing congestion and eliminate the need for vehicles to cross over the median to pass thereby reducing the number of cross-median accidents. The elevation of the profile would eliminate the rolling profile, eliminate floodwater from crossing the roadway and improve the sight distance. Curve corrections would bring the existing conditions up to the latest standard design.

**Goal:** *Facilitate the efficient flow of goods and services through this area*

This alternative would satisfy the goal of facilitating the efficient movement of goods and services through the area. This alternative would provide an improved route between Eastern Los Angeles County and Western San Bernardino County and Southern Kern County. This alternative would complete the planned integrated regional transportation network between San Bernardino County and the Eastern Los Angeles County.

**Goal:** *Conform to state, regional, and local plans and policies*

This alternative would comply with state, regional, and local plans and policies. The alternative is consistent with the assumptions for the State Transportation Improvement Plan and with the Regional Transportation Improvement Plan by meeting the approved facility location and type which would be

a 4-lane facility. This alternative would conform to the Air Quality Management Plan (AQMP) by reducing emissions in the South Coast Air Basin by providing components of the AQMP in the State Route 138 corridor.

## 2.2 Other Alternatives Considered

### 2.2.1 Alternative 2: Building of Freeway

This alternative consisted of developing a freeway in the State Route 138 corridor. In the Project Study Report that was completed in 1992 it was one of the alternatives considered. It stated that the continuing intense development in the Antelope Valley would require development of a freeway by the year 2010.

This alternative was withdrawn from consideration at this time as it would not address the safety and operational problems of the existing highway and funding is not available. It is also currently inconsistent with the assumptions for the State Transportation Improvement Plan and with the Regional Transportation Improvement Plan.

### 2.2.2 Alternative 3: Transportation System Management (TSM)

At this time the project area does not meet the criteria for a Transportation System Management program. The project area is located in a unincorporated/rural area of Los Angeles County with the population below the 200,000 level that would make it eligible.

A TSM program would not satisfy the purpose and need of this project to improve safety, facilitate the movement of people and goods and comply with local, regional and state plans and policies. Therefore this alternative was eliminated from further consideration.

### 2.2.3 Alternative 4: Widening along the existing highway through Pearblossom

This alternative proposed to widen both sides of the highway through the community of Pearblossom. During preliminary design and environmental studies it was found that there is a significant concentration of commercial, residential property and an U.S. post office on the south side of the highway. This alternative would have substantial impacts to the community of Pearblossom by eliminating the center of the town.

### 2.2.4 Alternative 5: No Action

This alternative retains the existing roadway conditions. It has the following drawbacks:

- It is not consistent with the long-term objective of reducing congestion and improving the overall operation and safety for State Route 138.
- It would not provide sufficient capacity for projected 2024 traffic volumes.
- It would not improve safety conditions or reduce the number of accidents and fatalities.
- It would not facilitate the efficient movement of goods and services through the area.
- It would not complete the planned integrated regional transportation network between San Bernardino County and the Eastern Los Angeles County.
- It would be inconsistent with the 1990 STIP that allotted funds for Passing Lanes, Widen Bridge, and Channelization.
- It would not conform to the Air Quality Management Plan (AQMP)

## 2.3 Current Status of the Project

The California Highway Commission adopted State Route 138 as a State Highway in June 1950. Two projects were programmed in the 1998 State Transportation Improvement Program (STIP) for capital cost of 42.503 million-dollars to widen 2 lanes to 4 lanes, between Avenue T and 165<sup>th</sup> Street East. These projects are in the 1998 STIP and are described below:

**Table 9 State Transportation Implementation Plan**

STIP Number	Limit	Project Description
(A) 0694Q	PM 51.6 (KP 83.04)/60.2 (KP 96.88)	Near Palmdale. Avenue T to Longview Road Widen from 2 lanes to 4 lanes Capital Cost: \$19,766,000
(B) 0693J	PM 60.2 (KP 96.88)/63.7 (KP 102.51)	Near Pearblossom. Longview Road to 165 <sup>th</sup> Street East. Widen from 2 lanes to 4 lanes Capital Cost; \$22,740,000

Source: Project Nomination Fact Sheet 1998

Three other projects were programmed in the Interregional Transportation Improvement program (ITIP) for Design and Environmental Document (ED) support cost of 6.57 million dollars to widen 2 lanes to 4 lanes, between 165<sup>th</sup> Street East and the Junction of State Route 18/138. Limits of these projects and their funding are:

- 165<sup>th</sup> Street East to Avenue W- allocated \$1.58 million to complete the design and ED
- Avenue W to 199<sup>th</sup> Street- allocated \$2.275 million to complete the design and ED
- 199<sup>th</sup> Street to Junction 18- allocated \$2.715 million to complete the design and ED

## 2.4 Status of Other Projects or Proposals In The Area

In October 1998 the State Route 138 Safety Corridor Task Force was announced officially to the public at the Palmdale City Hall. The group is a multi-agency task force designed to reduce the number of people killed and injured in traffic related accidents on State Route 138 between the western City limits of Palmdale from State Route 14 into San Bernardino County till it reaches Interstate 15. Task Force involvement comes from elected officials from local and state levels, representatives from state, regional and local government agencies and the private sector. The objective of the Safety Task Force is to bring together various disciplines to study the accidents in the corridor and to find solutions related to safety. Various issues arouse from the scoping meeting and were addressed by the safety corridor task force such as stoplights, speed zone, and other operational improvement concerns. On July 23, 1999 Senate Bill 155 passed and in chapter 169 it stated that State Route 138 would be classified as a Safety-Enhancement double fine zone which represents a legislative concern for safety on this highway.

The following highlights some of the traffic and engineering improvements completed by Caltrans along State Route 138 since its designation as a Safety Corridor in September 1998.

- Increased the number of speed limit signs along Palmdale Boulevard (Route 14 to Ave S). (Completed: Nov 99)
- Installed safety corridor signs (Ave T to San Bernardino County Line). (Completed: Mar 99)

- Installed additional speed limit signs in Littlerock. (Completed: Nov 98)
- Refurbished faded pavement markings and limit lines on cross streets within communities of Littlerock and Pearblossom. (Completed: Dec 98)
- Installed oversize Stop Signs (48 in, 1.22 m) on the 96<sup>th</sup> St East and 165<sup>th</sup> St East intersections. (Completed: Nov 98)
- Replaced faded school area speed zone signs in Littlerock. (Completed: Sep 98)
- Installed No Stopping Anytime sign in front of elementary school in Littlerock. (Completed: Oct 99)
- Installed reduced speed zone ahead sign east of Littlerock. (Completed: Jun 99)
- Removed passing zone on bridge west of 96<sup>th</sup> St East. (Completed: May 99)
- Relocated obscured stop sign at 106<sup>th</sup> St East. (Completed: Dec 98)
- Replaced faded side road warning sign west of Longview Rd. (Completed: Sep 98)
- Installed signing and striping for aerial speed zone enforcement between Pearblossom and Llano. (Completed: Dec 98)
- Installed larger Narrow Bridge signs (48 in., 1.22 m) for approaches to bridge at Big Rock Wash. (Completed: Dec 98)
- Replaced faded crossroad warning signs for 165<sup>th</sup> St East. (Completed: Sep 98)
- Restriped edgeline for eastbound approach to 165<sup>th</sup> St East. (Completed: Nov 98)
- Removed excessive sand accumulated on roadway at vicinity of 165<sup>th</sup> St East. (Completed: Mar 99)
- Restriped faded centerline and replaced missing pavement markers between 165<sup>th</sup> St East and the junction with Route 18. (Completed: May 99)
- Replaced faded stop sign at 175<sup>th</sup> St East. (Completed: Dec 98)
- Removed all 55-mph advisory speed signs on all curve-warning signs between Avenue T and the San Bernardino County Line. (Completed: Feb 99)
- Installed curve warning chevrons for westbound approach to Avenue W. (Completed: Nov 98)
- Relocated westbound curve warning sign at Avenue W. (Completed: May 99)
- Extend double yellow centerline striping east of Avenue W. (Completed: May 99)
- Removed 9 passing zones between the junction with Route 18 and the San Bernardino County Line. (Completed: Mar 99)
- Installed double fine zone signs between Avenue T and the San Bernardino County Line. (Completed: Dec 99)
- Minor project to construct a soft median barrier (median rumble strips, pavement markers, and centerline striping changes) from approximately one mile west of Big Rock Wash to 1500' east of Ave W. (Completed: April 2000)

The following lists some of Caltrans proposed Interim Projects:

- Initiate a project to install left turn pockets at 96<sup>th</sup> Street East. (Construction will start in Fall of 2000)
- Initiate a project to raise the profile of the roadway approaching the Big Rock Wash Twin Bridges. (Construction will start in Fall of 2000)
- Initiate a project to install left turn pocket at 175<sup>th</sup> Street East. (Construction will start in Fall of 2000)

- Initiate a project to install standard right turn pocket at 165<sup>th</sup> Street East. (Construction will start in Fall of 2000)
- Install new detector loops at Division St. (Permit in review)
- Resurface pavement at 106<sup>th</sup> St East / Hampel Ave (Permit in review)
- Planned development at SE corner of Avenue S impacting State Route 138 from Avenue S to Fort Tejon Road. (IGR/CEQA review in progress)
- Unresolved parking issues along State Route 138 within the Communities of Littlerock and Pearblossom. (Under investigation)
- Local advertising signs creating a potential conflict with regulatory signs on State Route 138 within the Community of Littlerock. (Under investigation)
- Update existing Daytime Headlight Zone

California Highway Patrol (CHP)

- Increased the number of CHP Officers on patrol (with grant through end of 2000)
- Implemented Aircraft Enforcement
- Increased Radar Units
- Implemented Community Awareness Programs

As a member of the “Highway 138 Safety Task Force Committee” which consists of the California Highway Patrol, County of Los Angeles, Local cities and private citizens, Caltrans continues to seek ways to make the highway safer and better.

Caltrans District 8 (San Bernardino and Riverside Counties) have begun work on the environmental document that would increase the number of lanes from 2 lanes to 4 lanes with a median from Interstate 15 in San Bernardino County to the Junction of 138/18 in Los Angeles County.